

Quick Look: Economic Impact of Limited Archery Permits

The Issue: In 2008, the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission limited the number of elk archery tags in the Missouri Breaks management area. While the limitations applied to both resident and non-resident hunters, the limitation was felt most acutely by non-residents. MPI is attempting to estimate the local economic impact from the 2008 policy change.

Key Findings:

- In 2016, non-residents spent 3,356 fewer hunter days in the six hunting districts¹ examined compared to the average number of non-resident hunter days in years 2004-2008.
- The 2008 archery tag changes have led to a cumulative decrease in local economic activity of \$10,279,982.
- Elk populations in the six districts examined are all at or exceeding target populations.

Summary: In this report, Montana Policy Institute is attempting to isolate the changes resulting from the 2008 limited archery elk permits to: (1) the number of hunters and hunter days in the affected districts; and (2) the economic gain or loss to the local communities in and surrounding the affected districts.

In short, Montana Policy Institute finds that due to the changes in resident and non-resident hunting days in the districts, local communities suffered a combined economic loss of \$10,279,982 from 2009-2016. The decrease in non-resident hunting days results in an economic loss of \$13,130,881. However, there was an increase in resident hunting days in the region, which increased economic activity by \$2,850,899. Therefore, the combined aggregate economic loss is just over \$10,000,000.

The simple reason why fewer non-resident hunting days carry such an economic impact is because non-residents tend to spend quite a bit of money per day on lodging, food, and transportation. The average non-resident spent \$582 per day in 2016 in HD410. The average resident hunter spent only \$87. This is why even though the increase in resident hunting days far outpaces the decrease in non-resident hunting days, there is still a sizeable negative local economic impact from the 2008 changes.

Finally, this is a narrow look at the economic impacts to one region in the state. MPI only intends this information to be used to help inform future debates over the limited archery permit program and potential changes going forward.

¹ MPI examined HDs 410, 417, 620, 621, 622, and 700.



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Methodology:

FWP provides an annual harvest report for all the elk hunting districts across the state that can be accessed at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/planahunt/harvestReports.html>.

Montana Policy Institute generated a report for six hunting districts impacted by the 2008 changes: 410, 417, 620, 621, 622, and 700. The report includes the following data: **License Year, Hunting District, Residency, Number of Total Hunters, Total Number of Hunter Days, Number of Days per Hunter, Total Harvest, Total Bulls Harvested, Total Cows Harvested, Total Calves Harvested, Total Harvested with a Bow, Total Harvested with a Rifle, Total Number of Spike Bulls Elk Harvested, Total Bull Elk Harvested with Less than 6 Points & Total Bull Elk Harvested with 6 or More Points.** For this issue brief the only data from the report what will be utilized is the Total Number of Hunters and Total Number of Hunter Days – separated for Residents and Non-Residents.

The basis of our brief is that we took the 5-year average (2004-2008), prior to the implementation of the Limited Archer Elk Permits in 2009 for the Break's HDs and compared that Average Number of Hunter Days to the Number of Hunter Days for the years 2009-2016. We then calculated increase or decline from the average and multiplied it by the FWP's Estimated Expenditures for both Nonresident and Resident Elk hunters based on a per Hunter Day basis.

About the Montana Policy Institute: Founded in 2008, the Montana Policy Institute (MPI) is Montana's leading voice for pro-freedom policies and exists to form, equip, and mobilize a network of citizens dedicated to securing a free and prosperous future for Montana. MPI provides leadership training, communications support, and research in order to give Montana citizens and decision-makers the tools necessary to enact state policy that respects individual freedom, expects individual responsibility, and looks to government as an avenue of last resort rather than first. We believe Montana should be a place where Montanans can live, work, and prosper, and that pro-liberty policies are the best and surest route to achieving this goal.